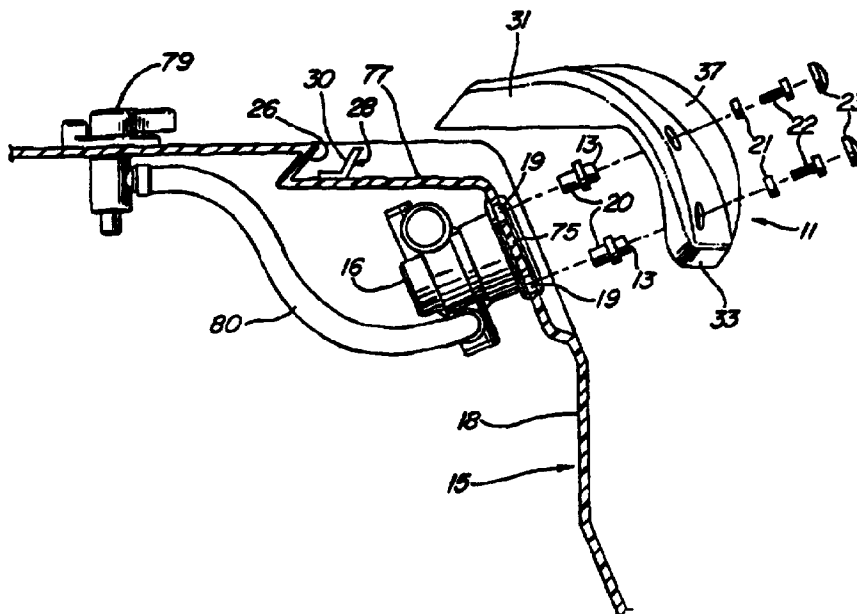


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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶: A61H 23/04, 33/00	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 96/11661 (43) International Publication Date: 25 April 1996 (25.04.96)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US95/07682 (22) International Filing Date: 15 June 1995 (15.06.95) (30) Priority Data: 08/321,747 12 October 1994 (12.10.94) US (71) Applicant: WATKINS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION [US/US]; 1280 Park Center Drive, Vista, CA 92083 (US). (72) Inventor: LARSEN, Christopher; 2319 Brookhaven Pass, Vista, CA 92083 (US). (74) Agent: UBELL, Franklin, D.; Price, Gess & Ubell, Suite 250, 2100 S.E. Main Street, Irvine, CA 92714 (US).		(81) Designated States: AU, CA, NZ, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>With amended claims.</i>

(54) Title: NECK MASSAGE PILLOW FOR SPA APPARATUS**(57) Abstract**

A unitarily-molded pillow (11) for mounting in a spa and having a flexible membrane (37) positioned therein and with respect to a water discharge jet (16) by an integrally-molded support structure including an upper collar (31), a lower rim (33), and respective side shoulders (43, 45), the support structure being integrated into a smooth, contoured front surface providing integral neck and head support, with the membrane (37) positioned to provide a pleasing warm neck massage effect and the jet (16) being adjustable via an air valve (79) for user comfort.

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NECK MESSAGE PILLOW FOR SPA APPARATUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION1. Field of the Invention

The subject invention relates to spas, whirlpools, and the like and, more particularly, to apparatus providing a neck massage system in association with
5 such equipment.

2. Description of Related Art

Spas, whirlpools, and the like are generally known in the prior art and have become increasingly popular as a source of relaxation and therapy. They generally include a spa shell or "tub" fabricated of various materials such as
10 fiberglass-reinforced polyester, acrylic, ABS, and vinyl.

In connection with such spas, it has appeared particularly desirable to provide a neck massage system. Prior art approaches to providing neck massaging action have typically provided one or more jets at or above the spa water level which direct water under pressure directly toward the user's body. A small cushion or
15 collar has been provided adjacent the expanded jet(s) to prevent direct contact between the head and the hard spa surface material and to otherwise cushion the head or neck area.

One problem with such prior art approaches to neck massage systems is that considerable splashing of water occurs around the neck and head area. Aside
20 from being annoying, water can splash into the ear or onto the hair, creating discomfort and potential health problems. One approach to remedying this problem is to provide a surface on the spa shell which overhangs the jets and thereby reduces splashing. Provision of such surfaces in molded spa shells creates fabrication problems and does not entirely eliminate splashing.

Another problem with the prior art is that the design approach results
25 in jets which are positioned too low. In other words, the neck of the user tends to be just out of the water such that jets which would effectively reach the neck create a considerable amount of splashing, whereas jets placed lower, at or near the water level, are muzzled by the spa water pool and do not reach the upper part of the neck.

-2-

An effort to meet some of the foregoing problems is represented by U.S. Patent No. 4,839,930 assigned to the present assignee. That patent discloses a discharge head comprising a frustoconical bezel. The circular opening of the bezel is fitted with a flat, flexible diaphragm. The diaphragm must be inflated by complicated internal structure. Complex piping and venting mechanisms are also required.

While the mechanism of the '930 patent addresses some of the problems of the prior art, its high part count and complicated structure make it impractical for manufacture and use. In addition, the projecting flat diaphragm structure is ungainly in appearance and provides far less than ideal head and neck support.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the invention to improve spas, whirlpools, and the like;

It is another object of the invention to provide an improved neck massage system for use in conjunction with spas, whirlpools, and the like;

It is yet another object of the invention to provide such a neck massage system which eliminates undesirable splashing;

It is still another object of the invention to provide a system which provides massaging of the entire neck;

It is another object of the invention to provide such a system which more optimally positions the massage apparatus;

It is another object of the invention to provide a substantially dry neck massage system in connection with a spa, whirlpool, or the like;

It is another object of the invention to provide a neck massage component for a spa which is suitable for fabrication as a single-piece moldable unit;

It is another object of the invention to achieve a waterfall effect wherein the water ejected from the massaging jets is permitted and directed to flow down and about the lower neck, shoulders, and back of the user, providing a continuous soothing flow of warm water to areas of the body not affected by the dry neck massage; and

It is yet another object of the invention to provide a neck massage system which greatly reduces part count and complexity, while providing integral support and massage functions.

-3-

According to the invention, a neck jet pillow is provided featuring a thin membrane area and a surrounding structure for supporting the membrane and for positioning it with respect to the head, neck, and spa. The membrane is made thin and flexible with respect to the supporting structure so as to achieve a pillow-like effect. One or more fixed or rotating jets are positioned in the spa and directed onto the membrane area, providing a pulsating neck massage action without direct contact between the water streams and the user. Other aspects of the preferred pillow include an upper collar portion having a rim which conforms to the spa perimeter, and thereby precludes splashing, as well as means for directing the water jet(s) such that the jet stream impacts against the membrane and then cascades down, creating a pleasing waterfall effect.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The objects and features of the present invention, which are believed to be novel, are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The present invention, both as to its organization and manner of operation, together with further objects and advantages, may best be understood by reference to the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, of which:

Figure 1 is a side view illustrating a preferred embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is a front view of a neck jet pillow according to the preferred embodiment;

Figure 3 is a side view of the pillow of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a back elevational view of the preferred neck jet pillow;

Figure 5 is a sectional view taken at 5-5 of Figure 4;

Figure 6 is a perspective view from a point sidewardly and rearwardly of a neck jet pillow according to the preferred embodiment;

Figure 7 is a front perspective view of the pillow according to the preferred embodiment; and

Figures 8 and 9 are perspective views of spa structure for cooperating with the neck jet pillow of the preferred embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The following description is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make and use the invention and sets forth the best modes contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention. Various modifications, however, will remain readily apparent to those skilled in the art, since the generic principles of the present invention have been defined herein specifically to provide a readily manufactured, particularly effective, and aesthetically pleasing neck massaging apparatus.

Figure 1 shows a cross-sectional view of a spa shell 15 and a cooperating neck jet pillow 11 according to the preferred embodiment. The pillow 11 generally includes an upper collar 31, a lower rim 33, and a thin membrane 37. The membrane 37 is positioned by the structural relationship between the spa shell 15 and the pillow 11 to receive one or more pulsating jets of water from one or more jets 16.

Various fastening mechanisms can be used to attach the pillow 11 to the spa shell 15. According to the approach shown in Figure 1, bosses 20 having a cavity bore to accept self-tapping screws 22 are glued or otherwise fixed in respective apertures 19 in the spa shell 15 for receiving respective mounting screws 22 and washers 21, which attach the pillow 11 to the spa shell 15. The front heads 13 of the bosses 20 are inserted into the openings 19 from the back side 18 of the spa shell 15. Respective screw covers 23 are preferably provided for aesthetic appearance.

The jet(s) 16 are conventional pump-driven water jets, conventionally mounted in the spa shell 15. Various types of jets may be used. For example, the discharge jet 16 may be in the nature of a venturi jet nozzle adapted to optimize the entrainment of the air into the water prior to discharge. The discharge jet 16 may have a reciprocating or circular motion within the head assembly to increase the benefits of the massage. A pulsating jet may also be utilized.

The detailed structure of the neck jet pillow 11 is further illustrated in Figures 2-7. With particular reference to Figure 4, it may be seen that the membrane 37 of pillow 11 has an oval perimeter and is bubble-like in its manner of projection from the surrounding supporting structure. This supporting structure includes a support frame 51, which rings the membrane 37 and forms into the remainder of the surrounding body of the pillow 11, the body including respective side shoulders or flanges 43, 45 and an upper collar 31. The ring-like support frame 51 includes a floor portion 41 which descends away from the membrane 37 and integrally forms into a lower rim 33.

-5-

Each side flange 43, 45 has first and second screw holes 67, 69 for receiving fastening devices for mounting the pillow 11 to a cooperating spa structure. While various mounting means will be apparent to those skilled in the art, the holes 67, 69 preferably are designed to receive the respective washers 21, screws 22, and screw covers 23. The holes 67, 69 may be appropriately countersunk as desired to provide for appropriate concealment of the mounting devices.

As shown in the cross-section of Figure 5, the floor 41 of the support frame 51 descends away from the membrane 37 and transitions in thickness to a much thicker and sturdier dimension. The membrane 37 is thin, for example, 20/1000-inch (20 mils) in thickness "b" throughout its generally oval contour, and transitions relatively abruptly in thickness to the much sturdier thickness of supporting ring 51. The ring 51 integrally forms into the collar 31, which includes a swept-back, generally curvilinear edge 53. Within the perimeter of the edge 53 is an integrally-molded splash guard 52. The edge 53 is preferably contoured such that its entire perimeter rim 54 abuts the spa shell 11, as does the rim 56 of the splash guard 52. Illustrative dimensions for the preferred structure shown in Figure 5 are $a = 5/16$ -inch, $b = 20$ mils, and $c \cong 5/16$ -inch. Such dimensioning, of course, may be varied without departing from the invention.

Overall, the membrane portion 37 is preferably sized and contoured to receive and position substantially the entire neck of the user against the membrane portion 37, while lending support to the head, so that the user may enjoy a completely relaxed neck massage without annoying splashing.

The portion of the lower rim 33 between the two side flanges 43, 45 may be contoured to track the side surface of the spa 15 and so as to be gapped away therefrom by a selected distance. Such a gap between the lower rim 33 and the side of the spa 15 may be a constant distance, for example, on the order of one inch.

The collar 31 and the side flanges 43, 45 of the preferred embodiment are further preferably designed to provide integral mounting with cooperating surfaces of the spa 15. In particular, the rim 54 of the collar 31 may mount flush against a cooperating planar upper floor surface 77 of the spa shell 15, for example, as shown in Figures 1 or 8. As shown in Figures 1 and 5, the spa shell preferably has a reverse draft or inclined surface 26 angled to matingly receive the angled curvilinear edge 53 of the pillow 11. A plastic brace 28 is further preferably glued to the floor surface 77 and has an obtusely angled brace surface 30 having a rectangular face which abuts and mates with an appropriately-shaped middle portion of the splash guard 52. Both the mating reverse draft surface 26 and the brace 28 serve to hold

the collar 31 and the rim 54 down against spa surface 77. In this manner, the collar 31 and rim 54 are prevented from rising under water pressure generated by the jets 16 such that water may not escape upwardly, but is instead forced downwardly.

5 The integrally-formed rear surfaces of the side flanges 43, 45 also preferably fit flush against the mounting surface area 75 of the spa 15. The flanges 43, 45, together with the curvilinear edge 53, cooperating surface 26, brace 28, and splash guard 52, then complete a 270-degree gasket-like seal about the user's head and neck area. This seal prevents water produced by the pulsating jets 16 from exiting other than through the gap between the lower rim 33 and the side of the spa 15, keeping the user dry above and about the pillow 11. The contours of the collar 10 31 and lower rim 33 can, of course, be varied to accommodate various spa shapes.

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate another embodiment of spa shell structure 176 which may cooperate with the neck jet pillow 11 of the preferred embodiment. This structure includes an upper floor 177 and a lower floor 189. The lower floor 189 is 15 triangular in shape and has two edges defined by first and second side walls 155, 157 which meet one another at an angle and dispose two jet openings 161, 163. This structure 176 includes an outer edge 183 which defines an edge structure including a vertical edge 165 forming into two respective side edges 166 which then form into two bottom edges 187, 189. This edge structure is molded to snugly and 20 continuously receive the corresponding edges of the pillow 11 so as to form a seal around the entire perimeter thereof except for the perimeter portion of the lower rim 33 which lies between the bottom edges 187, 189. In this region an opening 189 is created where water may flow downward behind the pillow 11 and out into the surrounding spa water.

25 The spa shell structure 176 may be, and preferably is, molded during initial molding of a unitary spa shell. It provides for the angled array of one, two, or more jets located in suitable jet openings 161, 163 so as to direct their water streams at the membrane 37 of the pillow 11.

In operation of the massage system of the preferred embodiment, 30 pulsating water from the jet(s) 16 beats against the membrane 37 which, in turn, transmits a pleasing massage effect to the neck of the user. Water travels away from the membrane 37 with the assistance of the descending floor 41 and exits into the spa water beneath the lower rim 33, providing a pleasing waterfall effect. The overall structure presents a continuous, aesthetically pleasing front surface for supporting the 35 neck in pillow-like fashion.

-7-

The pillow structure of the preferred embodiment is particularly adapted to injection molding or exothermic foam molding processes. While various materials known in the art may be used to mold a pillow structure according to the invention, the preferred pillow is preferably fabricated from a polyester-based or
5 polyether-based thermoplastic urethane material, for example, such as Elastollan 1100 Series No. 1180A, as available from BASF, Wyandotte, Michigan. Such materials exhibit excellent low-temperature properties, hydrolysis resistance, and fungus resistance, and are suitable for injection molding, blow molding, and extrusion.

The preferred approach to producing the subject invention is one
10 known to those skilled in the art, i.e., the preferred pillow is designed using computer-aided design, which permits both structural design and mold generation via computer. In particular, design may be done in I-DEAS 3-D modeling software version 1.3c using the "master modeler" and "master surfacing" modules, as available from Structural Dynamics Research Corp., Milford, Ohio. The I-DEAS-generated
15 model may then be output into an I.G.E.S. file for transfer, for example, into Esprit's CAM software, as available from Esprit Corp., for final detailing and mold generation.

The pillow structure constructed according to the preferred embodiment has the additional advantage that it readily absorbs heat from the spa water and
20 conducts it throughout the pillow 11. Thus, the pillow 11 and membrane 37 are heated and maintain a consistent temperature throughout operation, thereby providing a soft, heated, pulsating massage action and effect.

To provide additional utility, an air valve 79 may be installed in the spa exterior surface for convenient access by the user. The air valve 79 may be a
25 conventional valve connected with the jet 16 through tubing 80 and is adjustable to vary the flow out of the jet 16 for fine tuning user comfort.

While it is highly advantageous to integrally mold the pillow 11 as a unitary molded article to provide for easy manufacture, accurate massage transmission and a pleasant, warm feel, structures according to the invention could be fabricated
30 of several individually molded or otherwise separately fabricated parts attached together by various conventional means. Thus, for example, a frame structure may be fabricated in one step, for example, by molding or other processes, and a membrane formed in a separate step and attached to the frame by welding or other processes.

The structure of the preferred embodiment for supporting the membrane is sturdy, and generally exhibits relatively smooth transitioning surfaces free of abrupt ribs, shoulders, and the like. Various alternative embodiments with various ribs, shoulders, and similar support structures for the membrane could be
5 provided without departing from the scope of the invention.

Those skilled in the art will thus appreciate that various adaptations and modifications of the just-described preferred embodiment can be configured without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Therefore, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced other
10 than as specifically described herein.

CLAIMSWhat Is Claimed Is:

1. The spa apparatus comprising:
a spa shell having a top surface, a side surface, and at least one
jet means positioned in said side surface for discharging water there-
from; and
a pillow means having a flexible membrane means formed as
a part thereof, said pillow means positioning said membrane means
with respect to said jet means and a user's neck, the membrane means
receiving water discharged from said jet means and transmitting a neck
massaging action to said neck.
2. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said pillow means is a
unitarily molded plastic part.
3. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said top surface includes a
floor portion and wherein said pillow means includes an upper rim means for
mounting against said floor portion for preventing splashing of water on said user.
4. The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein said pillow means further
includes lower rim means contoured to track the side surface of said spa shell and
wherein said spa shell is so formed as to provide a gap between said side surface and
said lower rim means through which water discharged by said jet means exits said
pillow means.
5. The apparatus of Claim 4, further including respective first and
second flange means for providing attachment of said pillow means to said spa shell.
6. The apparatus of Claim 5 wherein each said respective flange
means mounts flush with said side surface for preventing splashing and for directing
the exiting of water through said gap.

-10-

7. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said pillow means includes a frame means for mounting said membrane means, said membrane means being bubble-shaped.

5 8. The apparatus of Claim 7 wherein said membrane means includes a lower edge and said pillow means includes lower rim means having a floor portion for supporting the lower edge of said membrane means, said floor portion descending away from said membrane means.

9. The apparatus of Claim 8 wherein said pillow means comprises a molded thermoplastic urethane material.

10 10. The apparatus of Claim 2 wherein said pillow means comprises a molded thermoplastic urethane material.

11. The apparatus of Claim 10 wherein said membrane means comprises a solid membrane having a thickness of 20 mils.

12. Massage apparatus for use with a spa having a spa jet for
15 discharging water comprising:

a membrane means for receiving fluid discharged from the spa jet and transmitting a massaging action to the neck of a user; and

body means for supporting said membrane means and for attaching said membrane means to said spa.

20 13. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said membrane means is molded of a heat conductive plastic means for providing flexibility to said membrane means and for conducting heat such that said membrane means is warmed to the temperature of said fluid.

25 14. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said plastic means is a polyester- or polyether-based urethane material.

15. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said body means includes a support ring surrounding and integrally formed with said membrane means.

-11-

16. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said body means includes a collar portion for mating with a surface of said spa.

17. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said membrane means comprises a flexible membrane having a uniform thickness of 20 mils.

5 18. Apparatus comprising:
 a tub having a side surface therein and a jet means for
 discharging fluid under pressure therefrom; and
 a unitarily-molded pillow means having an oval membrane
 formed therein, support means for said membrane, and first and
10 second flange means for attaching said pillow means to said spa, said
 membrane projecting from said pillow means for supporting the neck;
 said tub further including means cooperating with said flange
 means for positioning said membrane to receive fluid discharged by
 said jet means.

15 19. The apparatus of Claim 18 wherein said pillow means comprises
 a polyester- or polyether-based thermoplastic urethane material.

 20. The apparatus of Claim 18 wherein said membrane is 20 mils
 thick.

20 21. The apparatus of Claim 18 further including air valve means
 actuatable by a user for adjusting the discharge of fluid by said jet means.

 22. Apparatus comprising:
 a tub having a side surface therein and a jet means for
 discharging fluid under pressure therefrom;
 a unitarily-molded pillow means having a flexible membrane
25 formed as a part thereof and projecting therefrom, said membrane
 being sized and contoured for supporting the neck and head;
 said membrane means having an upper edge, a lower edge, and
 first and second sides, said unitarily-molded pillow further including:
 first and second shoulder means on either side of said
30 membrane means and integrally formed therewith for providing

-12-

side support to said membrane means and a surface for attaching said pillow means to the tub;

upper collar means for supporting the upper edge of said membrane means, said upper collar means further including an upper rim means;

a lower rim means for supporting the lower edge of said membrane means;

said lower rim means being gapped away from the spa surface for a selected interval between said first and second flange means;

said tub further including means cooperating with said flange means for positioning said membrane means to receive fluid discharged by said jet means; and

said upper rim means and first and second flange means further forming a seal with said tub, thereby directing water discharged from said jet means through said gap.

23. The apparatus of Claim 22 wherein said pillow means further includes a splash guard and said tub includes means cooperating with said splash guard and said upper rim means for retaining said pillow means in position with respect to said tub.

24. The spa apparatus comprising:

a spa structure including a side surface and at least one jet means located in said side surface for discharging a water jet; and

a member attached to said spa structure and having a back surface and a bottom edge, said back surface being gapped away from the side surface of said spa structure along the bottom edge of said member so as to create an opening between the bottom edge of said member and said side surface;

said jet means and back surface being positioned with respect to one another such that said water jet is directed against said back surface and causes water flow through said opening.

-13-

25. The spa apparatus of Claim 24 wherein said jet means and said member are further positioned with respect to said side surface so as to generate a shoulder massage action.

5 26. The spa apparatus of Claim 24 wherein said flow is a cascading flow out through said opening.

10 27. The spa apparatus comprising:
a spa structure including a side surface and at least one jet means located in said side surface for discharging a water jet; and
means covering said jet means for creating a cascading shoulder jet.

28. The spa apparatus of Claim 27 wherein said cascading shoulder jet is downwardly directed.

AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 15 February 1996 (15.02.96);
original claims 1, 18 and 22 amended; remaining claims unchanged (5 pages)]

- 5 1. The apparatus comprising:
 a shell means for containing water and having a side surface
 and at least one jet means positioned in said side surface for
 discharging a fluid stream therefrom; and
 a pillow means having a back surface and further having three
10 sides shaped to mate with said shell so as to form a watertight seal
 with said shell and further providing a relatively rigid frame supporting
 a flexible membrane means, said pillow means positioning said
 membrane means with respect to a user's neck and spaced apart from
15 said jet means by an air gap defined between said side surface and the
 back surface of the pillow means, the membrane means receiving fluid
 discharged from said jet means across said air gap and transmitting a
 neck massaging action to said neck.
- 20 2. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said pillow means is a
 unitarily molded plastic part.
3. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said top surface includes a
 floor portion and wherein said pillow means includes an upper rim means for
 mounting against said floor portion for preventing splashing of water on said user.
- 25 4. The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein said pillow means further
 includes lower rim means contoured to track the side surface of said spa shell and
 wherein said spa shell is so formed as to provide a gap between said side surface and
 said lower rim means through which water discharged by said jet means exits said
30 pillow means.
5. The apparatus of Claim 4, further including respective first and
 second flange means for providing attachment of said pillow means to said spa shell.

6. The apparatus of Claim 5 wherein each said respective flange means mounts flush with said side surface for preventing splashing and for directing the exiting of water through said gap.

5 7. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said pillow means includes a frame means for mounting said membrane means, said membrane means being bubble-shaped.

8. The apparatus of Claim 7 wherein said membrane means
10 includes a lower edge and said pillow means includes lower rim means having a floor portion for supporting the lower edge of said membrane means, said floor portion descending away from said membrane means.

9. The apparatus of Claim 8 wherein said pillow means comprises
15 a molded thermoplastic urethane material.

10. The apparatus of Claim 2 wherein said pillow means comprises a molded thermoplastic urethane material.

20 11. The apparatus of Claim 10 wherein said membrane means comprises a solid membrane having a thickness of 20 mils.

12. Massage apparatus for use with a spa having a spa jet for discharging water comprising:
25 a membrane means for receiving fluid discharged from the spa jet and transmitting a massaging action to the neck of a user; and
 body means for supporting said membrane means and for attaching said membrane means to said spa.

30 13. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said membrane means is molded of a heat conductive plastic means for providing flexibility to said membrane means and for conducting heat such that said membrane means is warmed to the temperature of said fluid.

35 14. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said plastic means is a polyester- or polyether-based urethane material.

- 16 -

15. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said body means includes a support ring surrounding and integrally formed with said membrane means.

16. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said body means includes
5 a collar portion for mating with a surface of said spa.

17. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said membrane means comprises a flexible membrane having a uniform thickness of 20 mils.

10 18. Apparatus comprising:
a tub having a side surface therein and a jet means mounted in said side surface for discharging fluid under pressure therefrom; and
a unitarily-molded solid plastic pillow means having an oval flexible membrane formed therein, said solid plastic pillow means
15 further including a relatively rigid support means for supporting said oval membrane, and first and second flange means located on opposite sides of said membrane for attaching said pillow means to said tub, said membrane projecting outwardly from said support means and first and second flange means;
20 said tub further including means cooperating with said first and second flange means for positioning said membrane spaced apart by an air gap from said jet means and so as to receive fluid discharged by said jet means.

25 19. The apparatus of Claim 18 wherein said pillow means comprises a polyester- or polyether-based thermoplastic urethane material.

20. The apparatus of Claim 18 wherein said membrane is 20 mils
thick.

30 21. The apparatus of Claim 18 further including air valve means actuable by a user for adjusting the discharge of fluid by said jet means.

22. Apparatus comprising:

a tub having a side surface therein and a jet means located in said side surface for discharging fluid under pressure therefrom;

5 a unitarily-molded solid plastic pillow having a flexible membrane formed as a part thereof, said membrane being sized and contoured for supporting the neck and head;

said membrane having an upper edge, a lower edge, and first and second sides, said unitarily-molded solid pillow further including:

10 first and second shoulder means on either side of said membrane and integrally formed therewith, each for providing side support to said membrane and a flat surface having means therein for attaching said pillow means to the tub;

15 upper collar means for supporting the upper edge of said membrane, said upper collar means further including an upper rim means;

a lower rim means for supporting the lower edge of said membrane;

20 said lower rim means being gapped away from the tub surface along a selected length between said first and second flange means to define an opening;

said first and second shoulder means, upper collar means, and lower rim means forming a support structure for said membrane, said membrane projecting in bubble-like fashion outwardly from said support structure;

25 said tub further including means cooperating with said first and second shoulder means for positioning said membrane spaced apart from said jet means by an air gap and in position to receive fluid discharged across said air gap by said jet means; and

30 said upper rim means and first and second shoulder means further forming a seal with said tub, thereby directing water discharged from said jet means downwardly and through said opening.

23. The apparatus of Claim 22 wherein said pillow means further includes a splash guard and said tub includes means cooperating with said splash guard and said upper rim means for retaining said pillow means in position with respect to said tub.

5

24. The spa apparatus comprising:

a spa structure including a side surface and at least one jet means located in said side surface for discharging a water jet; and

10

a member attached to said spa structure and having a back surface and a bottom edge, said back surface being gapped away from the side surface of said spa structure along the bottom edge of said member so as to create an opening between the bottom edge of said member and said side surface;

15

said jet means and back surface being positioned with respect to one another such that said water jet is directed against said back surface and causes water flow through said opening.

25. The spa apparatus of Claim 24 wherein said jet means and said member are further positioned with respect to said side surface so as to generate a shoulder massage action.

20

26. The spa apparatus of Claim 24 wherein said flow is a cascading flow out through said opening.

25

27. The spa apparatus comprising:

a spa structure including a side surface and at least one jet means located in said side surface for discharging a water jet; and

means covering said jet means for creating a cascading shoulder jet.

30

28. The spa apparatus of Claim 27 wherein said cascading shoulder jet is downwardly directed.

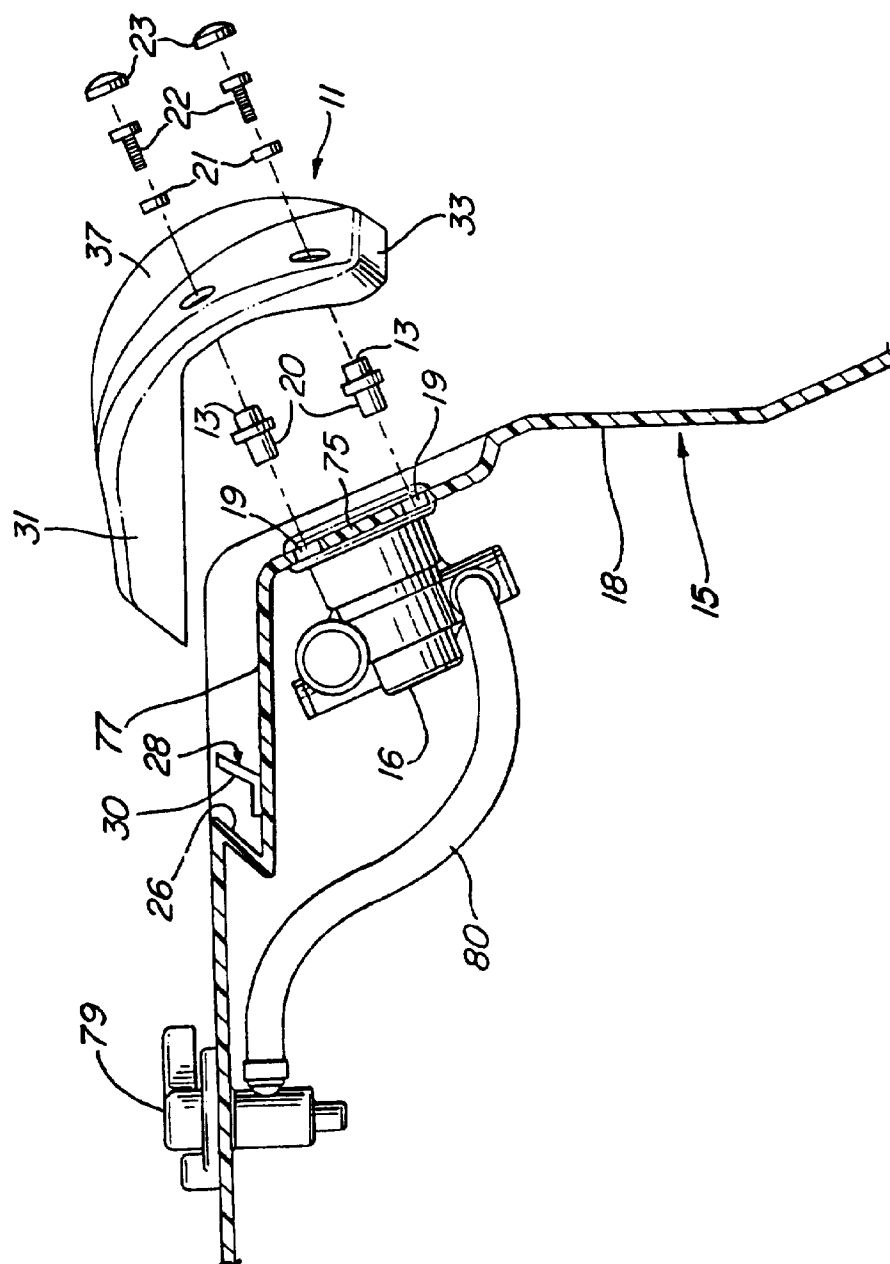


FIG. 1

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FIG. 2

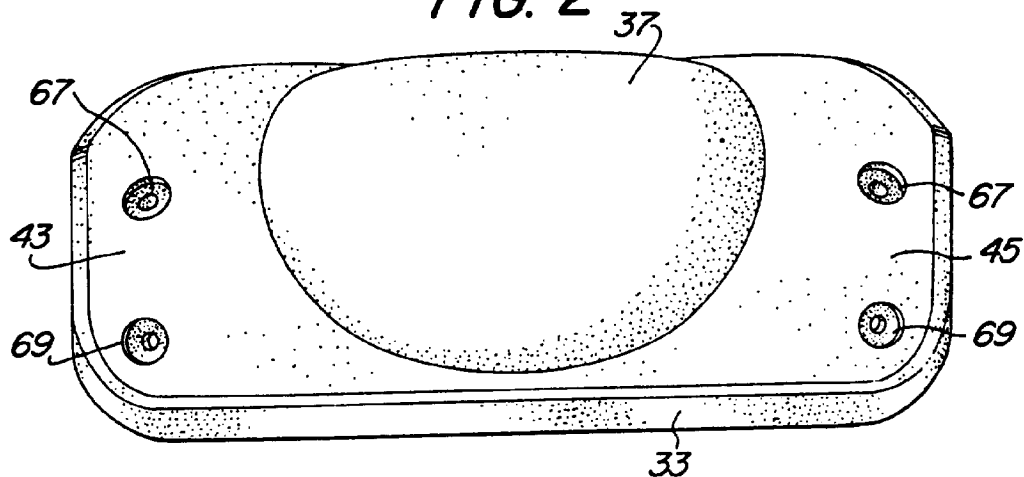


FIG. 3

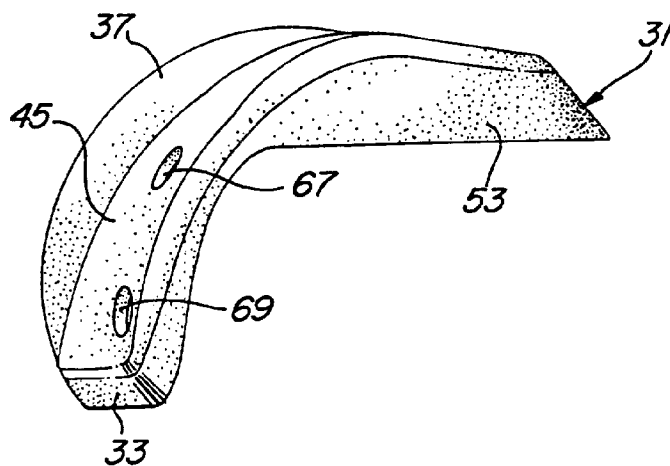
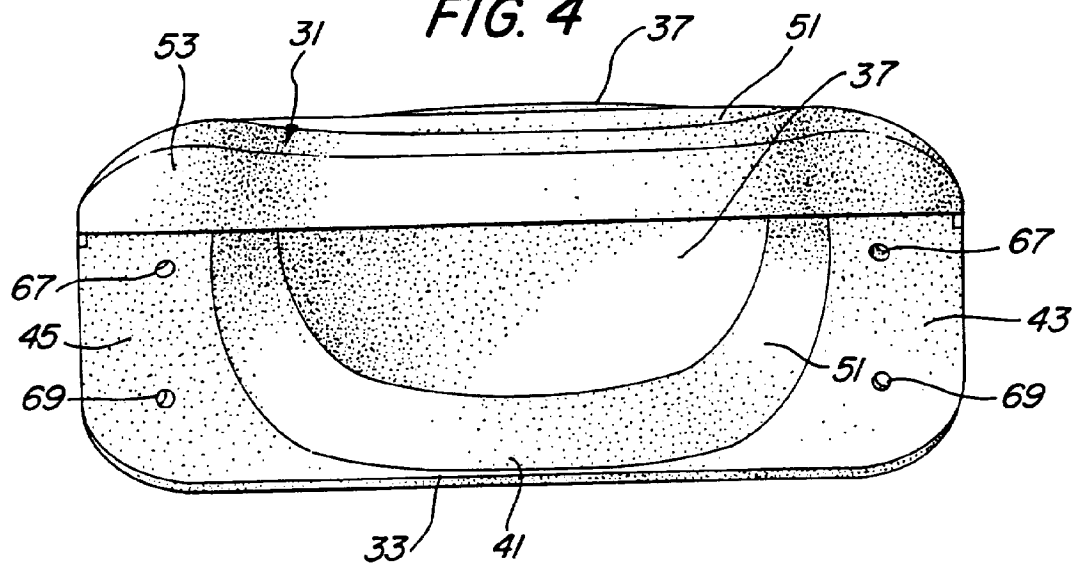


FIG. 4



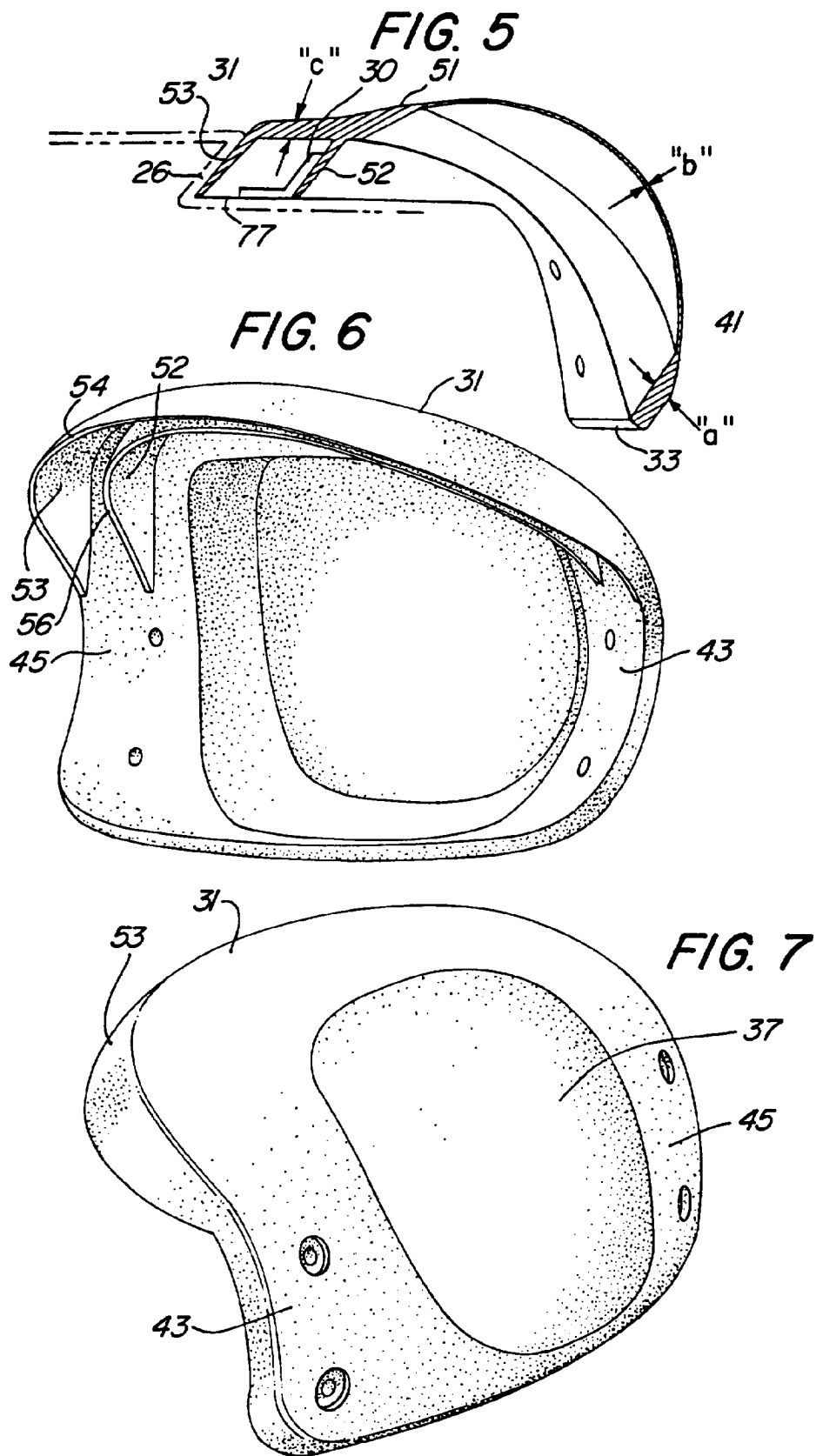
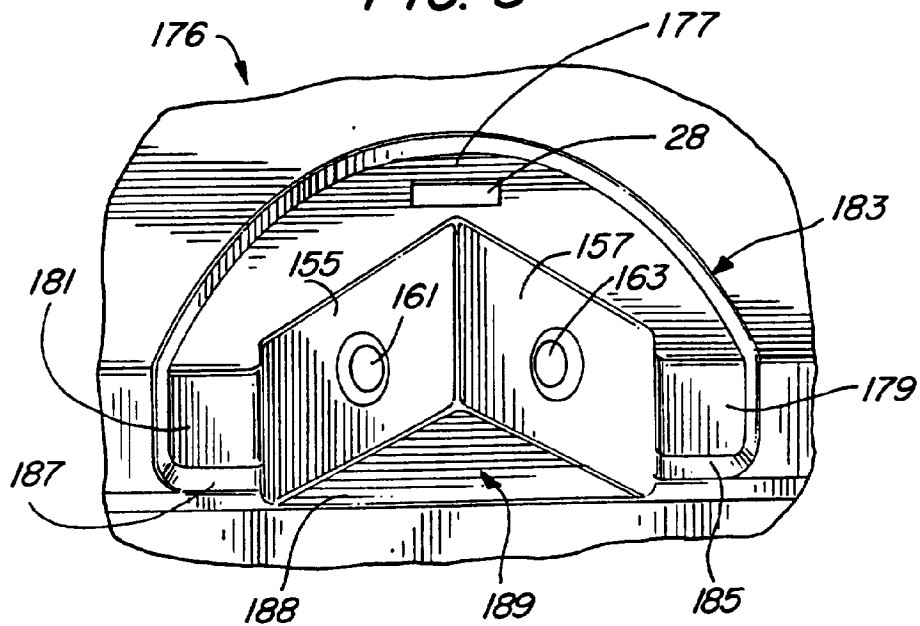
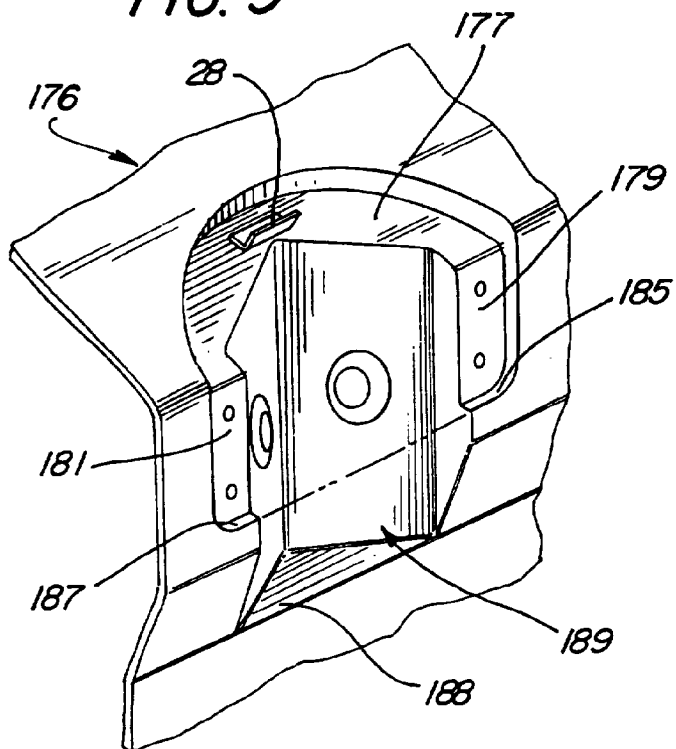


FIG. 8**FIG. 9**

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter nal Application No
PCT/US 95/07682

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 A61H23/04 A61H33/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 6 A61H

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US,A,4 839 930 (WATKINS) 20 June 1989 cited in the application	1,2,12, 13,15, 16,18 22
A	see column 3, line 31 - line 52; figures 1,6 ---	
A	US,A,4 139 001 (MACABEE) 13 February 1979 see abstract; figures 1-5 ---	1,12,18, 22
A	US,A,4 339 833 (MANDELL) 20 July 1982 see claims 1-4; figures 1,2,13,14 ---	1,12,18, 22
A	US,A,4 313 432 (SIEVERS) 2 February 1982 see column 4, line 32 - line 49; figure 1 -----	1,12,18, 22

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *&* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

3 October 1995

Date of mailing of the international search report

01.02.96

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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Authorized officer

Mark Jones

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US 95/07682

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 1-23 Spa apparatus with flexible membrane for transmitting a massaging action to the neck.
2. Claims: 24-28 Spa apparatus with a member or cover in front of water jet for directing the jet downwardly.

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☒ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-23

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter-
nal Application No
PCT/US 95/07682

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US-A-4839930	20-06-89	AU-B- 610400 AU-B- 3507189 CA-A- 1317415 CA-A- 1317416 CA-A- 1317417 DE-D- 68912402 DE-T- 68912402 EP-A- 0343912 JP-C- 1716440 JP-A- 2071741 JP-B- 4000665	16-05-91 30-11-89 11-05-93 11-05-93 11-05-93 03-03-94 11-05-94 29-11-89 27-11-92 12-03-90 08-01-92
US-A-4139001	13-02-79	NONE	
US-A-4339833	20-07-82	NONE	
US-A-4313432	02-02-82	AU-B- 5490680	07-08-80